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000 which are not found usually in the people of India. He is
461 not above manual labour, and even the Khasi clerk in the
333 Government offices is quite ready to take his turn at the hoe
335 in his potato garden. The men make excellent stonemasons and carpenters, and are ready to learn fancy carpentry and
276 mechanical work. They are inveterate chewers of *supari* and
804 the pan leaf (when they can get the latter), both men, women, and children; distances in the interior being often measured by the number of betel-nuts that are usually chewed on a
273 journey. They are not addicted usually to the use of opium or other intoxicating drugs. They are, however, hard drinkers, and consume large quantities of spirit distilled from rice or millet. Rice beer is also manufactured; this is used not only as a beverage, but also for ceremonial purposes. Spirit drinking is confined more to the inhabitants of the high plateaux and to the people of the Wár country, the Bhois and Lynngams
276 being content to partake of rice beer. The Mikirs who inhabit
751 what is known as the "Bhoi" country, lying to the north of the district, consume a good deal of opium, but it must be remembered that they reside in a malarious *terai* country, and that the use of opium, or some other prophylactic, is probably
525 beneficial as a preventive of fever. The Khasis, like other people of Indo-Chinese origin, are much addicted to gambling.
577 The people, and especially those who inhabit the Wár country, are fond of litigation. Col. Bivar remarks, "As regards truthfulness the people do not excel, for they rarely speak the truth unless to suit their own interests." Col. Bivar might have confined this observation to the people who live in the larger centres of population, or who have been much in contact with the denizens of the plains. The inhabitants of the far interior are, as a rule, simple and straightforward people, and are quite as truthful and honest as peasants one meets in other countries. My impression is that the Khasis are not less truthful certainly than other Indian communities. McCosh, writing in 1837, speaks well of the Khasis. The following
[147] is his opinion of them:—"They are a powerful, athletic race of men, rather below the middle size, with a manliness of gait and demeanour. They are fond of their mountains, and look down with contempt upon the degenerate race of the

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526 certain incantations freely referring to the many faults of the opposite side, and pours water at intervals from the bamboo in front of the target. This business lasts about two hours. Then they exhort the competitors of their respective sides, and the match commences amidst loud shouts. Every time there is a hit there are loud cheers, the competitors leaping high into the air, the umpires muttering their incantations all the while. At the end of each turn the number of hits are counted by representatives of both sides. At the close of the day the side with the greatest number of hits wins the match, the successful party returning home, dancing and shouting. The young women admirers of both sides assemble, and dispense refreshments to the competitors, taking a keen interest in the proceedings withal. Frequently large wagers
525 are made on either side. In the *Khadar Blang* portion of the
526 Nongkrem State as much as Rs. 500 are occasionally wagered on either side. In Jowai the practice is also to bet a lump sum, the amount being raised by subscription from amongst the competitors. More usual bets are, however, about one anna a head. The *nong khang khnam* and the men who prepare the targets receive presents from their respective sides. The Khasi bow carries a considerable distance, an arrow shot over 180 yards being within the personal knowledge of the writer. It is believed that Khasi bows wielded by experts carry up to 200 yards. The average range may be said, however, to be 150 to 180 yards.

524 Yule mentions peg-top spinning amongst Khasi children as
177 being indigenous and not an importation, but Bivar thinks that the game is of foreign introduction. I am, however, inclined to agree with Yule that peg-top spinning is indigenous, inasmuch as this game could not have been copied from the Sylhetis or the Assamese of the plains, who do not indulge in it. As the British had only recently established themselves in the hills when Yule wrote, they would scarcely have had time or opportunity to introduce an English children's game. Khasi
524 children also play a kind of "hop Scotch" (*khyndat mala shito* and *ia tiet hile*), and Yule writes, "Another of their recreations is an old acquaintance also, which we are surprised to meet with in the Far East. A very tall, thick bamboo is planted in

The cost of an archery contest varies considerably. [435] 526 In general it can be said that a shooter pays one anna (about 10 pfennigs, peace evaluation) for each shot. 525 All the various competitions together produce a tidy little sum, especially when the attendance is good. I have come across figures as high as 50 to 70 rupees which were got together in this way during the course of a year and were then spent at the end of the year together at a great feast after the main competition.

It is frequently the custom among the Synteng, not to collect this contribution, anna by anna; rather, a large sum, which is raised by collecting signatures, is bet with the opponent at the main shooting (the final game). This also occurs occasionally among the Khasi. (31)

31. Gurdon, The Khasis, reports on page 56 that a sum of 500 rupees was bet in the Nongkrem state in Khadar Blang at a shooting competition.

3. The Feast after the Archery Contest 527

A general feast is arranged with the money bet or saved. Everything is just as wild during this feast as during the archery competition. Several strong men go forth to fetch the pigs bought for this occasion. The living animals are tied to bamboo poles by their feet. Four men, two and two alternately, carry each a burden on their shoulders to the place of the festival. There is lively activity at that place. The men stand around huge fires and chat. Others busily arrange dishes and pots of brass --everything polished